

**DAVID M. MICHAEL, CSBN 74031**  
**LAW OFFICE OF MICHAEL & BURCH LLP**  
**One Sansome Street, Suite 3500**  
**San Francisco, CA 94104**  
**Telephone: (415) 946-8996**  
**Facsimile: (415) 946-8837**  
**E-mail: david@michaelburchlaw.com**

**Attorney for Defendant**  
**EVGENI KOPANKOV**

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**  
**NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**  
**SAN FRANCISCO VENUE**

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,**  
  
**Plaintiff,**  
  
**vs.**  
  
**EVGENI KOPANKOV,**  
  
**Defendant**

**Case No.: 0971 3:19CR00178-001 VC**

**CHARACTER LETTERS OF SUPPORT**  
**AS TO THE SENTENCING OF**  
**EVGENI KOPANKOV**

Attached are six character letters of support as to the Sentencing of Evgeni Kopankov:

1. Character Letter of Yordanka Kopankova.
2. Character Letter of Krum Kopankov.
3. Character Letter of Kristian Ivanov.
4. Character Letter of Edita Todorova.
5. Character Letter of Dr. Svetozara Zehireva, Pharm D, MBA, MPH, BCMAS
6. Character Letter of Mariya Pavlov

Dated: January 26, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

s/David M. Michael  
DAVID M. MICHAEL

Attorney for Defendant EVGENI KOPANKOV

CHARACTER LETTERS OF SUPPORT AS TO THE SENTENCING OF EVGENI KOPANKOV - 1

The Honorable Vince Chhabria  
United States District Judge  
Courtroom 4 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
450 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102


Dear Judge Chhabria:

I am Evgeni Kopankov's mother. My name is Yordanka Kopankova and I have the most wonderful and good son, which I am grateful to God for. There are many examples of where Evgeni has shown compassion and has helped those in need. An example of that is when Evgeni was very young, he dreamed for a new, fancy bicycle. His father and I decided to gift him one for his birthday. The happiness in his eyes is something I will never forget. He enjoyed the bicycle for exactly one week, when a classmate of his that came from a very underprivileged, poor family asked him to let him ride the bicycle for a while since his parents could not afford one. Without hesitation, Evgeni felt sorry for the child and gave him the bicycle. Even though his bicycle was returned into pieces, Evgeni did not get upset. Instead, he spent time with his brother fixing it.

In addition, Evgeni has always dreamed of having a puppy. But since we lived in an apartment, we never agreed to it. His begging and pleading was constant and we finally gave in. And just like that, one day, he brought in an abandoned, malnourished, tiny puppy from the street that he named Monica. He covered his entire room with plastic bags and was constantly cleaning after her to make sure she remained with us. Him and the puppy were inseparable, and she lived a very long and happy life with us thanks to Evgeni's love and dedication. I also saw these qualities in my son when I had an accident in 2007, and broke both of my legs. Both of my sons and my husband did a lot to help me, but Evgeni spent the most time with me joking that he now has to take care of me like I did of him when he was little.

My hopes and dreams are that I will have an opportunity to have both of my sons and daughters-in-law with me here in Bulgaria, so that I can enjoy the little time that I have left with them and hopefully help Evgeni and Mariya raise children of their own.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yordanka', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Yordanka Kopankova

11/14/2021

The Honorable Vince Chhabria  
United States District Judge  
Courtroom 4 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
450 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Judge Chhabria:

My name is Krum Kopankov and I am Evgeni Kopankov's brother. I am the older of the two and for as long as I could remember, I always wanted to have a little brother so that we can be partners on the playground, in school, and at home. Evgeni and I truly had the most worry-free childhood one can imagine. We spend time at the Black Sea every year together with my parents. I will always remember teaching Evgeni to swim in the sea, while our father watched us closely. He was very persistent and never gave up even when the big waves covered him up and swooped him away from the shore. A few years later, he became a better swimmer than me, which is something I am very proud of! Another memory I will always cherish is when Evgeni started school. I was in seventh grade, but I still remember that during recess and between every class, he somehow managed to come find me and tell me some fun even that took place. Every night I spend time with him teaching him how to read, write, and do the table of multiplication. In everything we have been through together, I set the best examples I could for him and stimulated him to be the best he can be. When we grew up, he became heavily involved in sports and chose to get enrolled in a professional sports academy. Sports taught him about discipline, responsibility, and teamwork, which is when he realized how important it is to be a team player and that great things can be achieved when doing your best and coordinating with others. He somehow evolved into the bigger brother. I am proud of the person he became and honored to be called his brother. When we became adults and I met my current wife, Evgeni helped us acquire the home of our dreams and helped up financially to furnish our place. Ever since we had our two children, he has been a devoted uncle who does everything possible to ensure their wellbeing.

I am aware that Evgeni has had a really hard time dealing with his personal life and business whereabouts ever since he was arrested and charged in 2019. He constantly expresses his concern about the possibility of being incarcerated for a long time and missing how his niece and nephew grow up. Evgeni also agonizes the idea that our parents are also heavily affected by everything that is happening and states that he will not forgive himself if anything was to ever happen to them due to his incarceration. I personally know how important family is to Evgeni and I am aware of his plans to have a family of his own, which I hope he is given the chance to accomplish.

Sincerely,



Krum Kopankov

11/17/2021

**The Honorable Vince Chhabria  
United States District Judge  
Courtroom 4 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
450 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102**

Dear Judge Chhabria:

My name is Kristian Ivanov. I am married to Mariya's cousin and I consider myself something of a cousin-in-law to Evgeni. As a gay man I endured a lot of discrimination and abuse in my home country of Bulgaria. I was often a subject of bullying, which is part of the reason why I left my homeland and I came to America to be with my partner, seek understanding, and to be able to express myself freely. Even though I reside in the United States, I spend most of my time in the Bulgarian community, which is still very conservative about homosexuality in general. When I arrived in Chicago five years ago at the age of 21 I was very afraid and shy to communicate with people. Evgeni and Mariya made sure to make me feel welcome and were very accepting of my relationship with Mariya's cousin. To me, the most important thing was that Evgeni did not push me away from their family and instead accepted me as a new, equal family member. He made sure to protect me from any verbal or physical abuse whenever we were out of the comfort of our home, which has happened many times and Evgeni has always been the first to jump in to stand up for me and say that I deserve the same respect as anyone else. I will forever be grateful to him for all that he has done and continues to do for the stability of my mental and physical health. I hope that he is granted an opportunity to redeem himself and maintain the mental wellbeing of himself and his wife.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kristian Ivanov', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kristian Ivanov

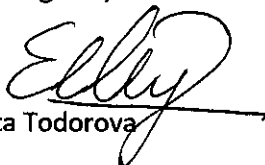
11/02/2021

**The Honorable Vince Chhabria  
United States District Judge  
Courtroom 4 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
450 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102**

Dear Judge Chhabria:

My Name is Edita Todorova, and I have been a friend of Mariya and Evgeni since 2016. I want to say a few words about Evgeni's character. I unfortunately suffer from an autoimmune disease called Hashimoto and when I was first diagnosed in 2019, I took it very hard as this disease can attack different parts of the body including bones, organs, and hormones. I shared my worries with Maria and Evgeni and expressed that I am not sure where I should seek medical help and what exactly I need to do to get this under control. I could not hide my fear from either of them, but Evgeni took it upon himself to call friends and relatives that suffer from the same disease, and connected me with them for help, guidance, and support. Because of him I came in touch with the right doctors and started taking the necessary medication to keep my thyroid disease under control. The reason why I am sharing this story is because we live in a world where most people are self-absorbed. Despite the fact that Evgeni is currently struggling with his business being slow due to the pandemic as well as his undergoing court issues, he made time to help me with whatever he could. I do not have any family here in America and I can honestly say that it wonderful to know that there is a male figure I can count on!

Best regards,

  
Edita Todorova


11/14/2021

**The Honorable Vince Chhabria  
United States District Judge  
Courtroom 4 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
450 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102**

Dear Judge Chhabria:

My name is Svetozara Zehireva and I would like to take the time to share something near and dear to my heart, which involves Mr. Evgeni Kopankov. I have known Evgeni since 2010 and his wife Mariya Zelyamova since 2005. They have been along my side during important life events such as my wedding, the birth of my daughter, my college graduations, and cancer treatment. With a heavy heart, however, I can say that I will never forget the fact that Evgeni helped me get out of an abusive marriage back in 2012 and was able to help keep me safe from my now ex-husband, who was an alcoholic and a drug addict. The hardships that Evgeni helped me overcome will never be forgotten. His acts of kindness did not stop at helping me emotionally and psychologically get over this toxic relationship and escape this awful period of my life. In fact, Evgeni took it upon himself to help my now ex-husband find the help necessary to keep him alive, sober, and out of trouble by finding the right rehabilitation facility that can accommodate him in his hometown in Bulgaria. After everything Evgeni and Mariya lived through with me, I believe that he is now able to differentiate right from wrong, and I wish the court could see him through my eyes. Even though he made a mistake, I believe he deserves a chance to redeem himself and to continue helping others. I truly believe that Evgeni has a big heart full of compassion and kindness.

Sincerely,

  
Dr. Svetozara Zehireva, PharmD, MBA, MPH, BCMAS

11/11/2021

**The Honorable Vince Chhabria  
United States District Judge  
Courtroom 4 17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
450 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102**

Dear Judge Chhabria:

My name is Mariya Pavlov. My family and I are really close friends with Maria and Evgeni. We have spent most of the holidays together at our home. I am a mother of two now teenage boys who adore Evgeni and call him their big brother. Whenever he is at our house, he spends more time with them than the grownups. We always joke that he is one of them. Every birthday or name day Evgeni always ensures that we celebrate them the way they want taking them to playrooms when they were younger to now buying them countless video games we wouldn't. Every time we are expecting people over our home they always ask when Evgeni is coming. Evgeni is very caring and nurturing with them always asking how they are doing in school if they are being good and how their grades are. He spoils them a lot but he always says they are good kids with exceptional grades and they deserve it! We all have gone to many summer and winter vacations together. My sons are now calling themselves snowboarding experts because of Evgeni. Evgeni and Maria are what people call lifelong friends.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MP', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Mariya Pavlov

**CERTIFICATE OF ELECTRONIC SERVICE**

I hereby certify that, on January 26, 2022, I caused to be electronically filed the foregoing with the clerk of the court by using the CM/ECF system, which will send a notice of electronic filing on all ECF-registered counsel by operation of the Court's electronic filing system. Parties may access this filing through the Court's system.

s/David M. Michael

DAVID M. MICHAEL

Attorney for Defendant EVGENI KOPANKOV